

## **Letter: Ivins has done well to circulate VLT petition**

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I want to take a moment to applaud Saratoga Springs Finance Commissioner Ken Ivins on the video lottery terminal (VLT) petition that he circulated recently, as well as his standing up for some very difficult decisions that needed to be made to balance the city budget. Budget challenges exist at every level of government, but it's at the local level where we most directly face the dilemma of service cuts in our communities, versus tax increases we cannot afford. Nobody wants either of these, and it is very difficult to work through that choice.

Let's face it: The budget problems that we now have in Saratoga Springs are so much worse because we lost the VLT funding due to a change in the allocation method made at the 11th hour.

The VLT revenue should be given back to the city and county; we are the only community to completely lose our funding. This seems completely unfair and punitive.

Commissioner Ivins' petition provided us with a communication vehicle; we need more of this. We continue to use our increasingly scarce resources to provide the Racino and its customers with police and fire protection, so this unfair situation is not going to get better with time.

Please send letters to the governor and the state legislative leaders to let them know that this remains a big issue for us, and that we rely on that funding. Thank you.

**Keith B. Kaplan, Saratoga Springs**

### **Comments**

The following are comments from the readers. In no way do they represent the view of saratogian.com.

tmackofsaratoga wrote on Jul 21, 2009 4:49 PM:

" Amen, Mr. Kaplan -

I don't believe that Petitions are all that effective as far as changing policymakers' minds, but they do go a long way in showing support for a cause.

I think we can all agree, regardless of our political philosophy, that the host city of a Racino incurs increased costs in providing infrastructure for that facility. And in so much as the State receives all the revenue from that facility, it is only fair for the State to compensate the host city for the support of that facility.

The new VLT compensation formula implemented by Gov. Patterson and Speaker Silver at the 11th hour was recrafted by them in such a way that only Saratoga Springs was cut off from compensation. Thus all the new formula is is another way to spread the wealth from "rich" folks in Saratoga Springs to the "poor" folks in the other host cities.

If Saratoga Springs continues to not receive compensation for hosting the State's VLT facility, I say we find a way to kick the Racino OUT of Saratoga Springs altogether!!! "